

The Bride of Peladon, by Barnaby Edwards

A Big Finish Productions Dr Who Audio Drama, released Jan 2008

[Part One]

(Footsteps, a bell chimes.)

FRANKIS: Midnight. Come on, Nardo. For once in your life turn up on time.

WOMAN: Blood.

FRANKIS: Nardo? Is that you?

WOMAN: So much blood.

FRANKIS: If this is your idea of a joke, Nardo, then...

WOMAN: Peladon will bathe in oceans of blood.

FRANKIS: Who... who are you?

WOMAN: Death.

(A door opens and closes.)

FRANKIS: Nardo. About bleedin' time. I've been... Oh. Sorry, your Majesty.

PELLEAS: Frankis, isn't it?

FRANKIS: Yes, your Majesty.

PELLEAS: Why aren't you below at the celebrations?

FRANKIS: I'm on duty, sir. The night watch.

PELLEAS: Oh yes.

FRANKIS: Until midnight.

PELLEAS: The witching hour.

FRANKIS: Sorry, sir?

PELLEAS: Midnight, Frankis. The time to commune with spirits and shades. The witching hour is when the ancients of Peladon are said to have pledged their souls to the Dark Beast. In exchange for what, I wonder? Fame? Power? Immortality? For what would you sell your soul, Frankis?

FRANKIS: A warm fire, and a pint of ale.

PELLEAS: (laughs) A good answer. And I shall join you for both shortly. First I think I'll take a turn around the battlements. Maybe even climb the old bell tower, eh? I need to clear my head. After all, it's not every day one becomes King.

FRANKIS: (laughs) I suppose not, your Majesty. Your mother would have been proud of you. Oh. Forgive me. My tongue runs away with me sometimes.

PELLEAS: Goodnight, Frankis. (leaves)

NARDO: You can wave goodbye to that promotion now.

FRANKIS: Nardo, you complete...

NARDO: Whatever made you mention his mother? You know how he feels about her. If she hadn't done away with religion I reckon he'd have made her a saint by now.

FRANKIS: Yeah, well, anyway, you're late, again.

NARDO: Getting frightened on your own, were you? Seeing ghosts?

FRANKIS: Ghosts?

NARDO: Well, they do say the Shade of Queen Elspira walks these very battlements when the moon is full, clamouring for her murder to be avenged.

FRANKIS: Don't be stupid. It was an accident, as well you know.

NARDO: Accident? (laughs) I say the old Queen Mother did away with her. Never quite saw eye-to-eye, those two. And, clever clogs, if it was an accident, how come no one ever saw the body, hey? There. You mark me. That Royal crypt's empty.

FRANKIS: Nardo, about this ghost. Have you ever seen or heard anything funny during your watch?

NARDO: Only you snoring when you've had too much to drink. Which reminds me. I brought you a present.

FRANKIS: Firewater?

NARDO: Fight spirits with spirits, I say.

(Cork removed.)

PELLEAS: I came. Speak to me. Speak to me, Mother.

WOMAN: Pelleas. My son.

PELLEAS: Then it's true. I... I had to be sure. They spoke of a ghost. Your ghost.

WOMAN: My hour is almost nigh. Soon I must return to the sulphurous flames from whence I have come.

PELLEAS: Flames? No, you can't leave...

WOMAN: Pity me not, but listen. If ever you loved me, then revenge my murder.

PELLEAS: Murder?

WOMAN: They say, do they not, that I died hunting in the forest. That I was unseated, and fell to my death.

This is a lie. A lie which shames the whole of Peladon. I was murdered, Pelleas, and the murderer was not of this planet.

PELLEAS: An off-worlder ?

WOMAN: Yes, my son. And as we speak, that off-worlder approaches Peladon. When they arrive, you will know them, and you will kill them.

(A gust of wind, a single bell chime, then silence.)

(The hissing of an Ice Warrior:)

ZIXLYR [OC]: This is Ambassador Zixlyr. (static)... fire. Repeat, this is Amba... (static)... dor Zixlyr of... (static) Can anyone hear me? My ship has been attacked. The pilot is dead. I am wounded. We are haemorrhaging fuel from the rear engines. (static) ...quire urgent assistance. Repeat, require urgent assistance. Please, will someone help?

(The Tardis materialises. Tardis door opens.)

ERIMEM: We made it, Doctor.

DOCTOR [OC]: Speak to me, Erimem. Tell me what you can see.

ERIMEM: Not a lot. Everything looks broken or damaged. Or on fire.

DOCTOR: On fire? That's good. Means the life-support's still functioning, pumping oxygen around the ship. There's still hope. We need to find the bridge quickly. Get a move on, Peri! Come on.

PERI: I'm coming as quick as I can. I was just getting the... Oh, charming. Well, don't wait for me, then.

(Tardis door closes.)

PERI: I was only the one who heard the distress call in the first place.

(Drilling.)

FOREMAN: Elkin wants to see you.

YOUNG MINER: What?

FOREMAN: I said, Elkin wants to see you...

(The drilling stops.)

YOUNG MINER: All right, all right. No need to shout. You carry on yelling like that and you'll bring the whole mineshaft down on us.

FOREMAN: Yeah, you carry on talking like that I might just do it. Where's the respect due your elders and betters, you little tunnel rat?

YOUNG MINER: Dunno. Guess it evaporated the moment Mum made an honest man out of you.

FOREMAN: Ah, the youth of today, eh? Huh.

YOUNG MINER: You've only got yourself to blame, Dad. I learnt it all from you. So what's this about Elkin?

FOREMAN: He says you're digging in the wrong place. Something about resonance soundings. He's found a hollow cavern up ahead. End of the seam, he reckons.

YOUNG MINER: Cavern my foot. Some expert he is. If I'm mining in the wrong seam, how come I found this?

FOREMAN: Here, let's have a look. Oh! She's a beauty, isn't she? Thirty seven years I've been mining Mount Megeshra. I've never seen a piece of trisilicate this pure. Never.

YOUNG MINER: Why don't you take it back to expert Elkin, then? Tell him to stick it where the suns don't shine, or better still, tell him to go back home to Vega Nexos and send up a replacement who knows what he's talking about.

FOREMAN: Now, now, son. Elkin's not too bad. He'll certainly be pleased when I show him this. I'm proud of you, son.

YOUNG MINER: Get out of here, old-timer.

FOREMAN: Don't be late for tea.

YOUNG MINER: I won't. Oh, and don't forget to give Elkin a great big kiss from me. Now then.

(Drilling. A piece breaks off.)

YOUNG MINER: Well, well. Elkin was right after all. Cavern.

WOMAN: So thirsty.

YOUNG MINER: Dad, is that you?

WOMAN: I can smell your blood.

YOUNG MINER: Dad? Dad?

WOMAN: Give me your life.

YOUNG MINER: Dad...! (echoes)

DOCTOR: Nearly there. The bridge is just beyond that bulkhead, I'd say.

ERIMEM: No time to waste then, let's... Oh, wonderful. Any ideas on how we're going to walk through a wall of fire?

PERI: Bring a fire extinguisher?

ERIMEM: Peri!

PERI: Make way for the emergency services, Ma'am.

(Hissing of fire extinguisher.)

DOCTOR: Well done, Peri, most resourceful.

PERI: The girl guides have nothing on me.

DOCTOR: Now, if I can just, er...

(Bleeps of door-code. Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Ah ha. Ambassador, I'm the Doctor and these are my companions Peri and Er...

PERI: You!

ELKIN: Elkin to Arktos. Are you reading me? Repetition. Elkin to Arktos, come in. Repetition.

ARKTOS [OC]: You mean repeat, you fool.

ELKIN: Arktos. I've been trying to raise you for days now. Where have you been?

ARKTOS [OC]: Busy. How are things progressing on Peladon?

ELKIN: Badly. We found the trisilicate motherlode a week ago, but... ever since we started mining it, things have been going wrong.

ARKTOS [OC]: Wrong? Explain.

ELKIN: Machinery going haywire, random cave-ins. Some of the miners say they've even heard voices.

ARKTOS [OC]: Superstitious primitives. And you believed them? You disappoint me, Elkin.

ELKIN: You're not here, Arktos. It's easy to dismiss these things from afar, but when you're in the midst of them they seem very real.

ARKTOS [OC]: Then it is fortunate that I shall shortly be able to assess the situation at first hand.

ELKIN: You mean you're coming to Peladon?

ARKTOS [OC]: Yes, Elkin. In fact, I am on my way now. Arktos out.

ELKIN: Arktos, wait. The wedding. There's a security net around the planet. Arktos. Well, at least we'll finally get to meet face-to-face.

(Door opens.)

FOREMAN: Mister Elkin, sir.

ELKIN: What is it, man? Another cave-in?

FOREMAN: No. A murder.

ELKIN: A murder? Who?

FOREMAN: My... my son.

ERIMEM: Peri, what is that creature?

PERI: An Ice Warrior. They come from Mars. We've met them before, but - it wasn't pleasant. Doctor?

DOCTOR: Forgive me. Where are my manners? Peri, Erimem, meet...

ZIXLYR: Zixlyr. Ambassador Zixlyr. You have encountered my kind before?

DOCTOR: I have had that honour, yes. What happened here, Ambassador?

ZIXLYR: I was en-route to take up my new post when the ship was attacked and my pilot killed. Two fighters blasted our fuel tanks as we passed close to the border of Arcturus.

(Explosion, alarm.)

DOCTOR: Everyone all right?

ERIMEM: What was it? Another attack?

ZIXLYR: No. That was a hull breach.

DOCTOR: Then we'd better get out of here fast. If the hull integrity is compromised this ship could disintegrate at any moment. Quick, everyone back to the Tardis.

ZIXLYR: That may not be possible.

DOCTOR: This is no time for going down with the ship, Ambassador.

ZIXLYR: Was your craft in the rear cargo bay?

PERI: If you mean the place that looked like a bomb had hit it, then yes.

ZIXLYR: Observe.

ERIMEM: What is it, Doctor?

DOCTOR: The section of hull that just got blown away. That's where the Tardis was.

WOMAN: Come to me. I grow impatient for your blood. Come to Peladon.

PERI: Doctor, what was that?

DOCTOR: Whatever it was, it didn't sound good. Ambassador, bring up the forward scanners.

ZIXLYR: Activating now.

DOCTOR: Ah.

PERI: That's not good, is it?

DOCTOR: No.

ERIMEM: Is the outside of the ship on fire? I thought you said fires couldn't happen in space.

DOCTOR: They can't. We're not in space now, Erimem, we've entered the atmosphere of a planet.

PERI: That noise. That was us being pulled by gravity, wasn't it?

DOCTOR: Yes. Zixlyr, I need manual control and I need it now.
ZIXLYR: You have it, Doctor. I will try to stabilise the shields.
DOCTOR: Erimem, help me with these controls. Read out what it says on the altimeter. We need to know how far away the surface is.
ERIMEM: Twelve hundred. Eleven hundred.
PERI: Doctor, what do you want me to do?
ERIMEM: One thousand.
DOCTOR: The most important job of all. Check the radar...
ERIMEM: Nine hundred.
DOCTOR:... and find us a place to crash.
PERI: I'm on it, Doctor.
ERIMEM: Eight hundred.
PERI: Crash?
DOCTOR: We're coming in too fast, Ambassador.
ERIMEM: Seven.
ZIXLYR: I know. Adjusting gravitational buffers now.
ERIMEM: Six hundred.
DOCTOR: Peri, the landing site!
PERI: Working on it!
ERIMEM: Five.
PERI: It's confusing, there seems to be two of us on the same trajectory.
ERIMEM: Four hundred.
DOCTOR: Probably ghosting. Another section of the ship on a parallel path.
PERI: Yeah, okay.
ERIMEM: Three hundred.
PERI: Do you want to go for the mountains or forests?
ERIMEM: Two hundred.
DOCTOR: Forests. Altogether softer.
ERIMEM: One fifty. Doctor?
PERI: Steer towards the valley on the right. There's a - there's a flattish area at the back.
ERIMEM: Seventy five.
ZIXLYR: The force-fields have gone, Doctor.
ERIMEM: Fifty.
DOCTOR: Everyone, strap yourselves down.
ERIMEM: Twenty five. We're going to crash!
PERI: Doctor!
(Metal breaking up for quite a while.)

WOMAN: Soon we will meet. Soon you will face your destiny. Destiny.
PANDORA: (waking) Who's... who's there? Hello?
(Bleeps.)
PANDORA: Pandora here. What is it?
ALPHA CENTAURI [OC]: Good morning, your Majesty. I trust you slept well?
PANDORA: I did indeed, thank you, Alpha Centauri. Your guest quarters are most comfortable.
ALPHA CENTAURI [OC]: Really? I had my ship's engineer base the designs on your royal residence back on Earth. I am pleased it meets with your approval. I myself have no eye for these things.
PANDORA: Was there a reason you buzzed me?
ALPHA CENTAURI [OC]: Oh, forgive me, your Majesty. Yes, we are about to land on the planet Peladon, and I was wondering whether you'd care to join me at the airlock? I thought perhaps we might go together and...
PANDORA: I'll grab a shower and be with you shortly. Pandora out.
(Bleep. Click)
PANDORA: Oh! Too bright.

WOMAN: Across oceans of space, you come to me.

PANDORA: Sorry. Got caught up with that amazing shower. You hexapods certainly know how to bathe in style. I haven't missed anything, have I?
ALPHA CENTAURI : Not at all, your Majesty. We are awaiting final security checks and then a royal escort will be dispatched.
PANDORA: All for little old me. How do I look?
ALPHA CENTAURI: Every inch the new Queen of Peladon!
PANDORA: Let's hope I last longer than the previous one.
ALPHA CENTAURI: Yes. A hunting accident, I understand. Most unfortunate.

PANDORA: You're telling me. I was looking forward to regaling her with all my mother-in-law jokes. How's he taking it? Pelleas?

ALPHA CENTAURI: I have not seen his Majesty since the incident. As you know his mother died but a week ago, so I should imagine he is still in mourning.

PANDORA: Poor boy. What's he like, Alpha Centauri?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Pelleas is yet young, Princess Pandora, but I have hopes that he will become as great a ruler as his beloved mother Queen Elspira. And with you at his side, galactic peace is certain and Peladon's place in the Federation is assured.

PANDORA: As is my father's access to the trisilicate reserves. Let's not pretend this is anything other than a marriage of convenience. I've never even met the boy. Hence my question. Please, Alpha Centauri, what is Pelleas like? Kind, cruel, intelligent, stupid? Sexy?

ALPHA CENTAURI: I think I see the escort now.

COMPUTER: Airlock opening.

PANDORA: (sighs) Well, I guess I'll find out soon enough.

ALPHA CENTAURI: One word of warning, Princess.

PANDORA: Yes?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Be careful of the old Queen Mother Beldonia. She has opposed this marriage from the start and even now she will do anything to prevent it. Anything!

BELDONIA: Great Aggedor, dark beast of our ancestors, I know I have sinned. I know what I have done, others would find hard to condone. But I have only the interests of my grandson at heart. The secret I keep from him would destroy him. Give me the strength to hold onto it, and the fortitude to face what is to come. I, Beldonia of the Royal House of Peladon, offer you this prayer with salt. And I seal it with blood.

WOMAN: So thirsty.

BELDONIA: Who.. who speaks to me?

(Door creaks open.)

BELDONIA: Oh. Who dares to disturb my private devotions?

PELLEAS: I'm sorry, Grandmother, I had to come and find you.

BELDONIA: Oh, Pelleas.

PELLEAS: She's here. Pandora's arrived.

BELDONIA: Princess Pandora, Pelleas. She may be from a modern elected dynasty, but we should still afford the poor girl a modicum of formality, don't you think?

PELLEAS: Sorry, Grandmother. Should we go to meet her, or should she come to us? What do you think she'll be like? Tired, I should expect. It's a long journey from Earth. Perhaps we...

BELDONIA: Pelleas, enough. You prattle like that before Princess Pandora and I would be very much surprised if she didn't get straight back in her ship and head home to Earth.

PELLEAS: Which will please you no end. You've been against her from the start.

BELDONIA: Not her. What she represents. Earth imperialism.

PELLEAS: You just don't like off-worlders, that's your prob... Off-worlders .

BELDONIA: Are you all right?

PELLEAS: Perfectly. Shall we go and meet her, then?

ERIMEM: It's just a small drop to the ground. Help me with him.

PERI: Take his arms. I've got his feet.

ERIMEM: Let's carry him to that tree.

(Effort.)

PERI: Do you think he's...?

ERIMEM: I don't know. I'm sorry, Peri, it's just... the Doctor was protecting me when we crashed. That's how he was hurt.

PERI: Here's the Ambassador. He was getting the medi-kit. Maybe there's something in there that'll...

ZIXLYR: Get down! The ship's going to...

(KaBOOM. Screams, metal falling.)

PELLEAS: Think of the alliance, Grandmother. Peladon and Earth united once again by a royal marriage. It's happened before.

BELDONIA: And it's failed before. Listen to you. Alliances, reforms, agreements? It all sounds wonderful until you stop to ask the question, why would Earth possibly want an alliance with Peladon? They want our mineral riches, Pelleas, that's why. They want the trisilicate.

PELLEAS: So, what's wrong with that? We've got plenty to spare. Elkin thinks he's found a completely untapped seam of trisilicate. Ten times as pure as the ordinary stuff, he says.

BELDONIA: And ten times more valuable to Earth. You mark my words. The moment we hesitate in supplying the trisilicate, Earth will forget about this alliance and force us to become its colony. Pelleas, you can't impute good motives to another world, simply because its Princess happens to be pretty. You sound

more like your mother every day. She was just as naïve as you.

PELLEAS: Don't criticise her. Don't you ever criticise her.

BELDONIA: Pelleas.

(Door opens.)

BELDONIA: Pelleas?

(Door closes.)

GROK: Ahem. Your Majesty?

BELDONIA: Oh, I do wish you'd use the corridors like anyone else, Grok. All this creeping about down secret passageways and listening in on private conversations. It's not very befitting for the King's Champion, is it?

GROK: Forgive me, my lady.

BEN: Well, what news have you?

GROK: Another death in the mines.

BELDONIA: A cave-in?

GROK: No, something else. Investigations are underway.

BELDONIA: That's it? That's what you came to tell me? Oh, come back when you know something definite.

GROK: That is not all, your Majesty. It's time.

BELDONIA: So soon? But it must be only been a few days since the last hunt.

GROK: Nevertheless, the beast is hungry.

BELDONIA: There can be nothing left alive in the forest to hunt, surely?

GROK: Ah, the beast will always find prey of some kind, your Majesty.

BELDONIA: Oh, very well, Grok. Lead the way.

GROK: As you wish, my lady.

ERIMEM: Osiris, I call upon your aid, you who know the secrets of the afterlife. Help me heal my friend the Doctor. He has suffered for my sake and I wished...

(Howl in distance. The Doctor wakes.)

DOCTOR: Now, where have I heard that sound before?

ERIMEM: Doctor, you're alive!

DOCTOR: Yes, and I hope to stay that way. Where are Peri and the Ambassador?

ERIMEM: Oh, they went to find help about an hour ago.

DOCTOR: An hour? Has it been that long?

ERIMEM: How have your wounds healed so quickly? It is surely a gift from the Gods.

DOCTOR: A gift from Gallifrey, actually. When a Time Lord is injured or close to death, the temporal platelets in his blood coalesce around the wound. Full body regeneration is a costly process, so ad hoc repairs are the norm.

(Howl.)

DOCTOR: Wish I could place that howl.

ZIXLYR: Do you wish to stop for a rest, girl? We still have far to climb.

PERI: I'm fine, thanks. And the name's Peri, Ambassador.

ZIXLYR: I did not mean to give offence, Peri. You may call me Zixlyr.

PERI: Zixlyr? That's a nice name.

ZIXLYR: In my language it means twin of the ice.

PERI: Wow. Peri means she who lives in the hills. So I suppose I should be happy up here amongst all these boulders.

ZIXLYR: It is a good name. We have many hills on my homeworld.

PERI: I know. I've been to Mars. My step-dad used to say he wished that's where I return to. The hills, that is, not Mars. Do you have any family, Zixlyr?

ZIXLYR: Come, we are nearly at the Citadel.

(Howl.)

ERIMEM: Whatever it is, it doesn't sound friendly. Can you stand? We could try and lose it in the fog.

DOCTOR: I rather fear it's too late for that. Unless there are two of them out there, that thing's clearly circling us. Which means it's already got our scent.

ERIMEM: Then we must arm ourselves. All animals hate fire.

DOCTOR: Actually, I've known a few who loved it, but the principle's sound.

ERIMEM: It's close. Get behind me, Doctor.

(Howl.)

DOCTOR: Of course. I remember now. We're on Peladon.

(Roar.)

ERIMEM: Doctor, look out.

DOCTOR: Aggedor!

[Part Two]

PELLEAS: Nardo. Nardo!

NARDO: Yes, your Highness?

PELLEAS: Where's my Grandmother? She should be here to welcome Princess Pandora.

NARDO: Ah. I believe the Queen Mother has er... gone hunting in the forest.

PELLEAS: Hunting? What in Aggedor's name can she be thinking of? The Princess will be here any...

HERALD: Ladies and gentlemen, honoured guests, please welcome the Ambassador from Alpha Centauri and his charge, Princess Pandora of Earth, soon to become the bride of King Pelleas of Peladon!

(Cheers.)

ERIMEM: It's... it's still with us, Doctor. We can't outrun it.

DOCTOR: If only we had something shiny.

ERIMEM: What?

DOCTOR: Something that sparkles. Er - a watch, a jewel, anything.

ERIMEM: A jewel? How about my signet ring?

DOCTOR: Oh! Hand it over. Quickly!

ERIMEM; Oh... Here.

DOCTOR: Thanks. Now, how does it go again?

(Growl of Aggedor.)

ERIMEM: Too late. It's here.

DOCTOR: That's it. ♪ Klokleda partha mennin klatch, naroon, aroon, aroon. ♪

ERIMEM: Doctor, what are you doing?

DOCTOR: Shh! ♪ Klokleda sheena jeerinaj, naroon, aroon, aroon. ♪

ERIMEM: It's working, Doctor. Keep going!

(Hums the tune, purring.)

DOCTOR: Yes, music tames the savage beast. There, there. Nothing to be afraid of now, is there? You know me, don't you? Hmm. And this is Erimem. He seems to like you.

(Aggedor sniffs.)

ERIMEM: What... is he, Doctor?

DOCTOR: An old friend.

PELLEAS: And this is the Temple of Aggedor.

PANDORA: Aggedor?

PELLEAS: The Royal Beast of Peladon, savage yet noble.

PANDORA: Is the statue a good likeness?

PELLEAS: Oh yes. My ancestors worshipped Aggedor as a god. That was years ago, of course. Nowadays we don't believe such nonsense.

PANDORA: How disappointing. And here was I thinking I'd have to convert to Aggedorianism when we married.

PELLEAS: No chance of that. My mother dissolved the church the moment she acceded to the throne.

PANDORA: Sensible woman. Pity she didn't dissolve arranged marriages too.

PELLEAS: Ah.

PANDORA: Sorry. That was crass of me.

PELLEAS: It's all right. I could sort of tell. You don't like me.

PANDORA: Pelleas, I barely know you. What I dislike is the idea that our lives have been decided for us. I want to find my own destiny, to make my own mark in the universe. To choose my own husband.

PELLEAS: I understand. There's someone else.

PANDORA: (sighs) Sorry, Pelleas.

PELLEAS: Thank you for being honest. My mother always said it was the finest quality one could possess.

PANDORA: She sounds like my kind of woman.

PELLEAS: I think she'd have liked you too. I do.

PANDORA: So, are there any left?

PELLEAS: Sorry?

PANDORA: Aggedors. Aside from this stone one, that is.

PELLEAS: Alas, no. The last one died nearly a century ago saving the life of one of my ancestors, Queen Thalira. I can show you a painting of her if you wish, in the Hall of Portraits.

PANDORA: I'd like that, very much.

PELLEAS: This way, Princess.

PANDORA: Pandora, please.

PELLEAS: Pandora.

(Door closes.)

WOMAN: Yes, Princess. This way.

ERIMEM: You have been to Peladon before then, Doctor?
DOCTOR: More than once. A long time ago. That's what's puzzling me.
ERIMEM: Why?
DOCTOR: The last time I came, Aggedor here died.
BELDONIA: That is not the Aggedor you knew. Doctor.
ERIMEM: Who are you?
BELDONIA: Beldonia of the Royal House of Peladon.
DOCTOR: Pleased to meet you, your Majesty. May I introduce the Pharaoh Erimem of the Royal House of Egypt?
BELDONIA: Royalty? Yes, you have noble features, girl, and an aristocratic meme.
ERIMEM: Thank you. I'm pleased I passed your test.
BELDONIA: (laughs) And such fire behind those eyes.
DOCTOR: Your Majesty, you mentioned something about Aggedor.
BELDONIA: The history books were wrong about you, Doctor. You're much younger-looking than they describe.
DOCTOR: You can't believe everything you read. Er... Aggedor.
BELDONIA: This is his offspring. A female.
DOCTOR: My Aggedor had a daughter?
BELDONIA: And her existence has been kept secret for a hundred and fifty years. Until now. Grok?
GROK: Your Majesty?
BELDONIA: Return the beast to the dungeons. I shall take the short cut to the Citadel with the Doctor and his companion.
GROK: As you wish.
BELDONIA: Come. We have much to discuss.

PELLEAS: And this is a bust of Paladin the Great, my grandfather.
PANDORA: He's got a good beard, hasn't he? Very imposing.
PELLEAS: Hmph. And very scratchy. Apparently I waited for hours when he kissed me at my naming ceremony.
PANDORA: How old were you?
PELLEAS: Fifteen.
PANDORA: What?
PELLEAS: Months.
(They laugh.)
PANDORA: Pelleas, what I said in the temple...
PELLEAS: Forget it. If all we are is friends then that is enough for me. I never had a sister, so... Well, what brings you here with such haste, Frankis?
FRANKIS: My lord... it... we have...
PELLEAS: We have what?
FRANKIS: Visitors, from off-world.
PELLEAS: Off-world? Where are they?
FRANKIS: In the infirmary. They crashed in a spaceship.
PELLEAS: Forgive me, Princess. I must attend to this immediately.
PANDORA: Shall I come with you?
PELLEAS: Best not. Why don't you look at some more of my family, see what you're getting yourself into. Come, Frankis.
FRANKIS: Sir.
PANDORA: Which one's your mother?
PELLEAS: Er, in between the halberds . Fourth on the left.
PANDORA: Fourth from the left, yes, but whose left? Er, eeny, meeny, miney...
(A door opens.)
PANDORA:... mo. Now, there's something you don't see every day. Where do you lead, I wonder? Secret passage to Peladon's treasury? A lovers' escape route? A short cut to the lavatories?
WOMAN: Princess.
PANDORA: Who's there? Hello?
(Walking forwards.)
WOMAN: Help me.

ELKIN: Elkin to Arktos. I'm at the rendezvous point. Where are you? Over. (static) Elkin to Arktos. Repet... Repeat. Where are you?
ARKTOS [OC]: I see you have finally grasped the difference between repetition and repeat.
ELKIN: Arktos. You said you'd try to land in the southern quarry. I've been here for over an hour, and there's

no sign of your ship.

ARKTOS [OC]: That is because you are not looking hard enough.

(Wibble.)

ELKIN: An invisible spaceship? But that's... incredible.

ARKTOS [OC]: Incredibly expensive, you mean. Which is why we need all the trisilicate we can carry. I think it is time you finally put a face to your employer, Elkin. Arktos out.

(Hatch opens.)

ELKIN: It's time I finally met the man I'm going to kill.

PERI: Zixlyr, you think they'll have found the Doctor and Erimem by now? That guard didn't seem too bright if you ask me.

ZIXLYR: My directions were most specific.

PERI: It's all a bit medieval this citadel, isn't it? Uniformed guards, stone arches, those doors we came through? And this place looks more like a mortuary than a hospital.

ZIXLYR: Peladon has had its fair share of deaths in recent times.

PERI: Really? Like who?

ZIXLYR: Queen Elspira, for one. And others.

PERI: Others?

(Door opens.)

ALPHA CENTAURI: I came as soon as I heard. How are they?

NARDO: I'm sorry, Ambassador, no one may see the patients until the King grants permission.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Oh really, Nardo, you're becoming intolerable lately. I've known you since you were still in swaddling clothes. Now, stand aside. Anyone would think you took me for an undercover spy.

NARDO: Er, yes, Ambassador. Sorry, Ambassador.

PERI: That'd be a pretty good disguise.

ZIXLYR: Alpha Centauri, how are you?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Flustered and fractious, Prince Zixlyr.

ZIXLYR: I am sorry to hear that.

PERI: Prince?

ALPHA CENTAURI: And who are you, child?

ZIXLYR: This is Peri. She and her friends saved my life. My ship was struck by Arcturan fighters. The border patrols seem especially severe at the moment.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Yes, well, there's been an incident.

PERI: What kind of incident?

ALPHA CENTAURI: The kind that need not concern you. I thank you and your friends for saving Prince Zixlyr's life. Where are they incidentally, your companions?

PERI: That's just it, we don't know. We left the Doctor and Erimem at the crash site, but we've heard nothing since.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Well, you must remain optimistic, girl. If your friends are sensible, they will have... Did you say the Doctor?

PERI: Yes. Why, do you two know each other?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Indeed we do. This could be more serious than I thought. I must find the King.

BELDONIA: Since his mother's accident, I have looked after the boy myself. He's well-meaning but hopelessly idealistic.

DOCTOR: Better than cynical and hidebound. Here, give me your hand.

BELDONIA: Oh. Oh, thank you. I trust you aren't referring to me as hidebound, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Wouldn't dream of it.

ERIMEM: Er, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Sorry, Erimem, I completely forgot you for a moment.

ERIMEM: At least I know where I stand.

DOCTOR: Here.

ERIMEM: Thanks. ERIMEM: I take it that's the Citadel?

BELDONIA: My ancestors carved it out of the living rock of Mount Megeshra more than a thousand years ago.

ERIMEM: Oh, it reminds me of some place.

DOCTOR: Castle Dracula.

ARKTOS: You do not appear surprised by my appearance.

ELKIN: I'm not.

ARKTOS: You have met someone from Arcturus before?

ELKIN: No. But I've read about your race. This is an atmospheric pressure unit, I take it? How does it work exactly? Presumably it has an autonomic gas exchange manifold tuned to adjust to isobaric variations. What

would happen if...?

ARKTOS: You ask too many questions. Tell me about the trisilicate.

ELKIN: Well, all the mining has ceased for the present.

ARKTOS: What?

ELKIN: A young miner was found dead this morning, the Foreman's son.

ARKTOS: So? Mining is a hazardous profession.

ELKIN: It was the manner of his death which has necessitated this hiatus.

ARKTOS: Explain.

ELKIN: His body was totally drained of blood.

WOMAN: Come, Princess, a little further.

PANDORA: I wish I'd thought to bring a ball of string.

WOMAN: Your reward awaits.

PANDORA: Oh, Dora, this is madness. The only reward you'll be getting is a medal for stupidity. Turn around. Nope, that didn't work. My legs are still moving.

PERI: I hate all this waiting around. I thought the King was supposed to be coming to see us.

ZIXLYR: He was probably waylaid by Centauri. Either that or he has higher things on his mind. I shall see what I can find out.

PERI: Thank you, Zixlyr.

ZIXLYR: Nardo, was it? I wonder if I might have a word?

NARDO: Oh. Certainly, Ambassador.

ZIXLYR: In private?

NARDO: Of course. Follow me through here.

PERI: Wherever you and Erimem are, Doctor, it's got to be more exciting than here.

ZIXLYR: Did you hear something?

ELKIN: No.

(Argh, thud.)

PERI: Zixlyr? Ambassador? Are you there? (door creaks) Oh, damn. Zixlyr, can you...? Nardo! Zixlyr? (Slapping a face.)

PERI: Right, Nancy Drew, time to go investigating.

ALPHA CENTAURI: I apologise for inconveniencing you, your Majesty, but I thought you ought to be informed.

PELLEAS: Thank you, Alpha Centauri. You acted wisely as always. It may as you say be nothing more than diplomatic coincidence.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Let us hope so.

PELLEAS: I will have him watched. And this girl. You say she mentioned the Doctor? Can it be true that he has returned after all these years?

ALPHA CENTAURI: It would appear so.

PELLEAS: That's an ill omen.

ALPHA CENTAURI: The Doctor has always been a friend to Peladon.

PELLEAS: I don't doubt it. But history teaches us that death travels with the Doctor, and we have had our fair share of misfortunes of late. Think about it. My mother's accident, the spaceship crash, and I understand there was some peculiar death in the mines this morning. That must give us pause.

ALPHA CENTAURI: You're forgetting the first death, your Highness.

PELLEAS: Disappearance, Alpha Centauri. No body was ever found.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Let's hope Zixlyr will appreciate the difference.

PELLEAS: You must excuse me. I've left the Princess alone for long enough. We will talk further on this matter. Thank you, Alpha Centauri.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Your Majesty.

(Door opens and closes.)

ALPHA CENTAURI: Alpha Centauri reporting. Come in.

VOICE [OC]: Have you made contact?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Not yet. But I believe him to be on Peladon now.

VOICE [OC]: We would prefer him taken alive.

ALPHA CENTAURI: I understand.

VOICE [OC]: If he resists arrest, however, kill him.

ERIMEM: What do we do now?

BELDONIA: What does one normally do at a door? We knock, of course.

DOCTOR: Is there anybody there, said the Traveller, knocking on the moonlit door.

ERIMEM: What are you talking about? It's daytime.

DOCTOR: Sorry, it's from a poem.

(The Listeners by Walter de la Mare.)

ERIMEM: Do you have a quotation for every occasion?

DOCTOR: Nice assonance - "quotation, occasion." I'll make a poet of you yet, Erimem.

BELDONIA: When you two have quite finished babbling, I suggest we get out of this cold.

(Heavy door creaks opens.)

DOCTOR: Once more unto the breach.

PANDORA: What now? Come on, mystery voice, you can't have led me all this way to show me a door. It's a very handsome door, mind you. The pussycat motif is a nice touch.

WOMAN: Do not mock.

PANDORA: Ah, there you are. Sorry, just wanted to get your attention.

WOMAN: It is the Lioness, scourge of the desert, devourer of the weak, queen of all she surveys.

PELLEAS [OC]: Pandora? Are you down there?

PANDORA: Sorry, I've got to go. It's been a joy talking to you. Must do this again some time. Coming, Pelleas.

WOMAN: Oh, we will meet again, Princess. You may be sure of that. And when we do, you will face the Lioness herself.

PELLEAS: What were you doing down there?

PANDORA: Exploring. Sorry, I can never pass up a secret passageway.

PELLEAS: Hmm. Well, you'll like it here, then. The Citadel's full of them. I used to have endless fun as a child hiding and leaping out unexpectedly on various aunts.

PANDORA: (laughs) I bet you were their favourite nephew.

PELLEAS: (laughs) Yeah. I was their only nephew.

PANDORA: So, how are the patients, in the infirmary?

PELLEAS: Oh, fine. I think. I don't know. I got intercepted en-route by Alpha Centauri.

PANDORA: He can rattle on a bit, can't he?

PELLEAS: That he can.

PELLEAS: Pandora, I think there's something you should know. Last night on the battlements, I... Not again. Frankis. To what do we owe the pleasure this time?

FRANKIS: My Lord, the Queen Mother. She's returned from hunting.

PELLEAS: Finally. Did she and Grok bring anything back? If she'd had a successful morning she'll be in a good mood.

PANDORA: My mother's the same, only with shopping.

FRANKIS: She has not returned empty-handed, your Majesty.

PELLEAS: Excellent. What did she find in the forest this time?

FRANKIS: Two more off-worlders.

FOREMAN: And I'm telling you, Elkin, none of my men will continue working until this is sorted out.

ELKIN: Please understand. I'm sympathetic to your loss, but we've already fallen far behind schedule, and I really don't think that...

FOREMAN: Damn you, Elkin! All you can see is the fat bonus you're going to get at the end of this, but something's wrong here. There's something in those tunnels, something evil. It killed my son, my only boy, and I'll see you in hell before I risk losing anyone else.

(Leaves. Communicator beeps.)

ELKIN: I told you I wasn't to be disturbed.

ARKTOS [OC]: Tell the miners to assemble in front of the main seam at sunset this evening.

ARKTOS: I have a little surprise for them.

ELKIN [OC]: What sort of surprise?

ARKTOS: Let's just say it'll be a fairly explosive revelation. I would be somewhere else at the time if I were you. Arktos out. And as for you, Elkin, your time approaches.

(Bleeps.)

ZIXLYR: Close. Close. It is here somewhere. At last I shall know the truth. Alyxlyr .

PERI: I never had you down as a jewel thief, Zixlyr.

ZIXLYR: What? Have you been following me, girl?

PERI: Oh. We're back to girl are we? Well, Ambassador , my curiosity was piqued shortly after you knocked out our guard at the infirmary and slunk off without a word. It was further excited just now when I watched you open that casket and extract an extremely expensive-looking necklace.

ZIXLYR: I can explain.

PERI: I think you'd better, because I have a strong dislike of thieves, and just in case you were thinking of

trying anything, I also have a very strong pair of lungs. One move from you and I'll scream the Citadel down.

ZIXLYR: This is not a necklace.

PERI: You could have fooled me.

ZIXLYR: It is a memory hub. It belonged to the last Martian Ambassador to Peladon, the one whom I replaced.

PERI: You're not boring me. Go on.

ZIXLYR: If I am correct, it should contain information about why Ambassador Alyxlyr disappeared without trace nearly a month ago. If I activate it, we shall be able to hear her final report.

PERI: If this is a trick, you'll regret it.

ZIXLYR: It is no trick. Listen.

ALYXLYR [OC]: This is Ambassador Alyxlyr. I shall be brief, for I fear I am discovered. There is a dark secret at the heart of Peladon, a secret which kills. I believe Queen Elspira knows of it and possibly her son too. I hope and pray I am wrong. I shall activate the homing signal in this necklace, lest this be the last message I am able to send. Do not trust the Royal Family. Do not... (door creaks) They come. Alyxlyr out.

ZIXLYR: This is all the evidence I need. Alyxlyr is dead, and the Royal Family of Peladon shall follow suit.

DOCTOR: You've redecorated.

ERIMEM: Doctor, it's been a century since you were last here.

DOCTOR: So? I once kept the same console room in the Tardis for nearly three hundred years. This throne room used to be all dark and gloomy. Now look at it. Bright, modern and utterly soulless.

BELDONIA: I couldn't agree more. It was Elspira's idea. One of many.

ERIMEM: Elspira?

BELDONIA: My daughter-in-law. Pelleas's mother. We didn't see eye-to-eye on most things. The people loved her, of course, as they always will. She was beautiful, graceful, a reformer. One of them, they believed.

DOCTOR: How exactly did she die?

BELDONIA: An accident. She fell from her mount whilst out hunting in the forest. Killed outright. A tragedy.

ERIMEM: How awful. Did Pelleas witness it?

BELDONIA: No. No one saw.

DOCTOR: How do you know she fell, then?

(Door opens.)

BELDONIA: Ah, Pelleas. There you are.

PELLEAS: Grandmother.

BELDONIA: And... you must be Princess Pandora. Welcome to Peladon. I trust you don't find us too primitive for your sophisticated Earth tastes?

PANDORA: Not at all, your Highness. I was just telling the King how much I admired the architecture of the Citadel.

BELDONIA: Sadly I seldom find the time to stop and gawp at the walls. Pelleas, my dear, allow me to introduce some very special visitors. This is the Pharaoh Erimem, member of a very ancient Royal dynasty from Earth. Fancy that, Pandora.

ERIMEM: Your Highness. Princess.

BELDONIA: And her companion here is called...

PELLEAS: The Doctor.

DOCTOR: Well-deduced, your Highness. I take it the news of our arrival has preceded us?

PELLEAS: You are not the only off-worlders to have arrived at the Citadel today.

ERIMEM: Of course. Peri and Ambassador Zixlyr. They made it here safely, then?

PELLEAS: Unharmful. Would you like to see them?

ERIMEM: Very much so. Doctor, are you coming?

DOCTOR: I'll stay here, if I may. I'd like to talk to the Queen Mother some more.

BELDONIA: Another time, perhaps. I must have a quick word with Grok. Until later, Doctor. Erimem. Pelleas. Oh, and, er, Princess.

PANDORA: I thought you said she'd be rude.

PELLEAS: Pandora, I'm sorry. She's not usually so blatant. Something must have rattled her. I'll speak to her once we've been to the infirmary.

PANDORA: You go with Erimem. I've done enough walking for one day. I'll keep the Doctor company, if I may.

DOCTOR: That's most kind.

PANDORA: Not at all. I need to pick your brains.

PELLEAS: If you're sure, Pandora?

PANDORA: Positive. Now, get going.

ERIMEM: Catch up with you later, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Indeed. Give Peri my regards.

DOCTOR: Pandora. There's a name I've not heard in a while.

PANDORA: I certainly live up to it. Ever since I could crawl I've been poking my nose into things that don't

concern me.

DOCTOR: Sounds just like my friend Peri.

PANDORA: I hope she's more circumspect than me. We all know what happened to that curious cat.

DOCTOR: Now, if only Peri thought more like that.

PANDORA: Speaking of cats. You've been here before. Can I ask you something?

DOCTOR: Of course. Fire away.

PANDORA: Are there any lions on Peladon?

PERI: What are you talking about, Zixlyr? What kind of evidence is a garbled message? I'd need a little more than that before I committed regicide.

ZIXLYR: Out of my way, girl. I have business to attend to.

PERI: I am not going to let you go, Zixlyr. You're behaving irrationally. Just because some dumb blonde of an Ambassador leads...

(Thump, Peri cries out.)

ZIXLYR: Be careful what you say. Alyxlyr was my sister.

PERI: You'll never get away with it. There'll be witnesses.

ZIXLYR: Then it is time I started eliminating them. This is only a ceremonial weapon, but I am sure it will answer to the task. If you have tears, Peri, prepare to shed them now.

PERI: Zixlyr! Please! No!

[Part Three]

BELDONIA: Great Aggedor, hear my words, I pray. A dark malignancy is at work in the Citadel, and we are powerless to halt its advance. Death is everywhere, and we know not to whom we should turn. Have the visitors from the stars brought this malevolence with them? Or has the curse of Peladon returned? From out of the mists of legends a man has returned to help us. The Doctor. But, Great Aggedor, can he be trusted? Should he be told the truth?

WOMAN: No. The Doctor is our enemy. He must die.

ERIMEM: This is indeed an impressive Citadel, your Majesty.

PELLEAS: You don't find all this stone oppressive?

ERIMEM: I was brought up amongst sandstone and marble. I find it comforting. It gives me a sense of proportion. Even the highest among us occasionally need reminding that we are ultimately nothing. A breath in the wind, a flash in the furnace of eternity.

PELLEAS: But we can make changes that last. We can alter history.

ERIMEM: Can we? My travels with the Doctor have taught me otherwise. History is like a great tree. We may snap a twig here, cut off a branch there, but the tree keeps growing. From a distance it is still the same tree despite all our efforts.

PELLEAS: That's a depressing thought.

ERIMEM: Not at all. Even the smallest change may save a life. Now, shouldn't we be getting on? I'm anxious to see Peri again.

PELLEAS: Of course. The infirmary is just around the corner.

ERIMEM: She's a lucky girl. Pandora.

PELLEAS: Why?

ERIMEM: To be marrying someone who cares about the lives of others. Caring, intelligent and handsome. What more could a Princess wish for?

PELLEAS: Erimem...

ERIMEM: Look! Isn't that one of your guards?

PELLEAS: Yes, it's Nardo.

(Slapping face.)

PELLEAS: Come on, man. Wake up.

ERIMEM: I'll check the infirmary.

PELLEAS: Nardo? It's Pelleas. What happened?

NARDO: I was hit, from behind.

ERIMEM: Empty. No signs of a struggle, though.

PELLEAS: Nardo, where are the Ambassador and the girl?

NARDO: Not sure. I don't remember.

PELLEAS: Will you be all right to return to the guardhouse? We need to start searching the Citadel.

NARDO: You can rely on me, your Majesty.

PELLEAS: Don't worry, Erimem. We'll find...

WOMAN: Feed me. I am hungry.

ERIMEM: Pelleas, what's wrong?

PELLEAS: No... nothing. Just a bad headache. I get them sometimes.

WOMAN: Feed me fresh blood.

PELLEAS: Shut up!

ERIMEM: I was only trying to help.

PELLEAS: No, not you. Sorry, I think I need some fresh air. Would you mind accompanying me to the battlements? Nardo will find us when he has news. I hope you have a head for heights.

(Breaking objects.)

ZIXLYR: You only prolong the inevitable. Face your death with dignity.

PERI: No thanks. I'd rather live even if it means being undignified. And anyway, who are you to lecture me on dignity?

ZIXLYR: I am a Prince.

PERI: Well, start acting like one. Okay. So, so your sister's right. Pelleas and Beldonia are guilty and you want revenge. But think about the practicalities. How are you going to kill them? Stab them? Poison them? Push them off the battlements?

ZIXLYR: That is taken care of. I have a Xanthoid Volatiser.

PERI: I'm guessing that's a bomb, right?

ZIXLYR: Correct. That is what I carried from the crash.

PERI: But I... I thought that was a survival kit.

ZIXLYR: Quite the opposite. Now, stay still.

PERI: No!

BELDONIA: I, Beldonia of the Royal House of Peladon, offer you this prayer. With...

(Door creaks opens.)

BELDONIA: Doctor, what is the meaning of this?

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, your Majesty, there wasn't time to knock.

PANDORA: We had to find you as quickly as possible.

BELDONIA: In my youth you would have been put to death for such an intrusion.

DOCTOR: I know. I made that mistake once before. Listen. Have you ever heard voices?

BELDONIA: Voices? What a ridiculous question.

DOCTOR: You're not denying it, though. What do they sound like?

PANDORA: It's all right, I've heard them too. Well, actually just the one voice. A woman's, low and whispering.

BELDONIA: I'm sorry to disappoint you, Princess. Madness may be a prerequisite among the Royal Families of Earth, but here on Peladon it is blissfully rare.

PANDORA: As I see is common sense. I'm trying to help you.

BELDONIA: When I need the help of a spoilt little brat from an upstart Royal Family with more money than sense, I will ask for...

DOCTOR: Stop it! Just stop it, will you? Your Majesty, something is very wrong here and you know it. I can see it in your eyes. There's something you're concealing. Something to do with the death of Queen Elspira.

BELDONIA: Don't be absurd.

DOCTOR: Permit me to repeat the question you so deftly parried just now in the Throne Room. If no one saw the body, how do you know Elspira fell from her horse?

BELDONIA: There was no body. There was no accident. Elspira simply vanished.

DOCTOR: And I think I know where.

BELDONIA: What?

DOCTOR: Tell her, Pandora.

PANDORA: There's a secret passageway behind Elspira's painting in the Hall of Portraits. It leads underground, and at the end of the passageway is a door without a lock, carved with the figure of a lioness.

BELDONIA: A what?

DOCTOR: A creature from Earth. A creature found nowhere else in the universe in fact. Now, why should that be carved on a door here on Peladon?

BELDONIA: I... I don't know.

DOCTOR: I think it's high time we found out, don't you?

ERIMEM: Nice view.

PELLEAS: I come up here to the bell tower when I need to think. The wind blows away the cobwebs in my head.

ERIMEM: It certainly is high up.

PELLEAS: The highest point in the Citadel. From here, you can look out across the kingdom from the Kargas Mountains in the east to the shores of Lake Vanashor.

ERIMEM: It's so wild. Savage and yet beautiful.

PELLEAS: I think so.

ERIMEM: I've never seen a sunset like it. Or sun-set. And down there. That's the forest where we crashed,

isn't it?

PELLEAS: It's also the forest where my mother died.

ERIMEM: Sorry. I... Your grandmother spoke of the accident.

PELLEAS: Hmm. Accident. That's what she'd like the world to think. My mother was murdered, Erimem. Murdered by an off-worlder.

ERIMEM: An off-worlder?

PELLEAS: Yes, Erimem. Like you.

PERI: Arcturus!

ZIXLYR: What are you prattling about now?

PERI: Those aliens who fired on your ship. They were from Arcturus. What if one of them was here on Peladon and killed your sister?

ZIXLYR: No one fired on my ship.

PERI: Yes, they did. We saw the damage for ourselves, remember?

ZIXLYR: Then you did not look closely enough. The damage was internal. I detonated a device in the cargo bay, a device large enough to cripple, but not destroy, my ship.

PERI: Oh. I get it. You needed to reach Peladon without going through the standard security checks.

ZIXLYR: Correct. They would have detected my bomb immediately.

PERI: But the pilot...

ZIXLYR: An unfortunate casualty of my plan.

PERI: That's what you'll say about me too, isn't it? You're no Prince. You're a petty, murdering ignoble criminal. The lowest of the low!

ZIXLYR: You will regret uttering those lies.

PERI: Not half as much as you'll regret going down in history as a grubby little murderer! I'm sure your sister would be proud of you. Revenge isn't justice, Zixlyr. If you truly wanted to put right your sister's death, you'd find out for certain who killed her and then expose the villains. That way, you'll come out a hero and not just some maniac with a bomb.

ZIXLYR: But the recording. You heard what she said about Pelleas and his mother.

PERI: She said she didn't *trust* them, that's all! She also said something else was at work here, something dark at the heart of the Citadel. Okay, maybe the Royal Family knew about it, but that doesn't mean they killed her.

ZIXLYR: She was my twin. Alyxlyr and Zixlyr, twins of the ice.

PERI: (sighs) We'll find who killed her, I promise, and then we'll see that justice is done.

ZIXLYR: We?

PERI: Yes, Zixlyr, we. And the first thing we need to discover is where this heart of darkness is. I'm guessing underground.

FOREMAN: Look, I don't like this any more than you do. Elkin said sunset and it's still sunset, so let's give the man a chance.

MINER 1: Never trust someone from Vega Nexos.

FOREMAN: Oh, don't be stupid. Elkin's all right. He just doesn't...

MINER 2: Hey, over here.

FOREMAN: What is it?

MINER 2: Looks like a new piece of equipment.

ELKIN: Stand back. Let me see.

(Beeps.)

MINER 3: What's he got?

ELKIN: It's measuring stuff. No readouts, just this counter.

MINER 1: I've never seen it before.

MINER 2: What do you make of it, boss?

FOREMAN: Elkin. You... Run! It's a bomb!

(Panic. Boom!)

(Distant explosion.)

ERIMEM: Pelleas, what is it?

PELLEAS: Get out of here, quickly.

ERIMEM: Pelleas... (screams)

PELLEAS: Erimem!

ERIMEM: Pelleas, please. Don't let me fall!

PELLEAS: Hold on. Give me your hand.

ERIMEM: I can't!

PELLEAS: Trust me!

(Distant rumbling from the explosion.)

PERI: Zixlyr. You... you set off the bomb!

ZIXLYR: No, Peri. I swear it. It sounded as if it came from below, from the mines.

PERI: Well, what are we waiting for? Come on.

ARKTOS: Come on Elkin. Hurry, we do not have much time.

ELKIN: I'm going as fast as I can.

ARKTOS: Well, do not miss anything. We need every piece of trisilicate we can lay our hands on.

ELKIN: You mean that I can lay my hands on. Do you even have hands?

ARKTOS: There is a large piece to your right, under that miner.

ELKIN: I've done everything you've asked, Arktos. And do you know why?

ARKTOS: For the fifty per cent split of the profit, of course.

ELKIN: No. For all the profits. And a spaceship out of here. An invisible one.

ARKTOS: (laughs) And what makes you think I will permit that, you pathetic little man?

ELKIN: This.

(Energy weapon.)

ARKTOS: You kill me, and my creditors will simply transfer their efforts to tracking you down and extracting the money from your corpse.

ELKIN: That's a risk I'm happy to take. Time to meet your maker, Arktos, if you have one. I've waited a long time for this moment. Farewell, you slimy freak.

(Weapon fails to fire, several times.)

ARKTOS: (laughs) Hopeless to the end. Did you really think I had not planned on your double-crossing me?

ELKIN: No. Arktos, I...

ARKTOS: Goodbye, Elkin.

(Energy blast, gurgle, thud.)

ARKTOS: And good riddance.

PANDORA: Your Majesty. Beldonia.

DOCTOR: I think she's coming round. Easy does it! Don't sit up too quickly.

BELDONIA: What ...? Would someone kindly explain what I'm doing on the ground?

DOCTOR: There's been an earth tremor. You fell.

BELDONIA: I most certainly did not. It was her, the Princess. She pushed me!

DOCTOR: If she hadn't you would currently be under half a ton of stone.

BELDONIA: Don't speak in riddles.

PANDORA: The statue of Aggedor. I saw it tumbling towards you, so I pushed you out of the way.

BELDONIA: And enjoyed it immensely, I expect.

DOCTOR: I think that's all the thanks you're going to get, Pandora.

PANDORA: Don't worry, it's more than I expected. Shall we go and see what caused the tremor?

DOCTOR: Yes. From the sound of it, it came from the mines. Could be a cave-in. Your Majesty, will you all right?

BELDONIA: I am not an invalid, you know. Now, you two go to the mines and see what can be done. I'll alert the infirmary to prepare for casualties. And Princess?

PANDORA: Yes, your Majesty?

BELDONIA: Thank you.

PANDORA: You're... welcome.

BELDONIA: Well, don't stand there dawdling. Off to the mines!

DOCTOR: Yes, your Majesty.

PANDORA: At once, your Majesty.

ZIXLYR: There must be twenty bodies here. No survivors as far as I can tell. Peri?

PERI: Look at this one, Zixlyr. He's only a kid. Barely a chance to experience much of life before fate reached out and took it from him.

ZIXLYR: I do not think fate had much to do with it.

PERI: Well, chance. Misfortune. The... the gods. You know what I mean.

ZIXLYR: I do indeed. But this was no accident.

PERI: What?

ZIXLYR: We had mines on Mars too, Peri. In a cave-in, only the roof and upper walls collapse, but look here. The floor of the cavern is damaged. You can see where the lighter rock is exposed.

PERI: If it wasn't an accident, what was it?

ZIXLYR: Sabotage.

ARKTOS: Trisilicate now on board. Computer, seal the cargo doors. Begin lift-off preparations.

VOICE: Let us get as far away from this miserable planet as possible.

ARKTOS: What? Identify yourself. You?
(Energy weapon fires. Arktos cries out.)

PANDORA: Have you been to the mines before?

DOCTOR: Not for some considerable time.

PANDORA: My father says mining's a fool's game. Too much risk for too little return.

DOCTOR: That's easy to say when you're rich enough to import your minerals from other planets. Peladon is a poor planet, and trisilicate is all it has.

PANDORA: Earth is not so wealthy either. Why else do you think my father wants an alliance between our planets? My marriage to Pelleas grants Peladon a secure footing in the Federation, and guarantees Earth a healthy discount on trisilicate imports. This is a marriage of convenience, Doctor, not of love.

DOCTOR: Let's get moving, shall we? The exposed seam should be right along here.

PANDORA: Doctor, look out. Is that one of the miners?

DOCTOR: No. Look at his eyes. From Vega Nexos, I'd say. Possibly their supervisor. Interesting.

PANDORA: What is?

DOCTOR: He didn't die in a cave-in. This man was shot. By a high-impulse laser, I'd say.

PANDORA: I wonder who he was?

PELLEAS: Elkin.

PANDORA: Pelleas.

PELLEAS: His name was Elkin. He was in charge of mining the new trisilicate seam.

DOCTOR: Your Majesty, this is a pleasant surprise.

ERIMEM: Doctor.

DOCTOR: And Erimem too. I'm glad to see you're safe and well.

ERIMEM: Well, it was touch and go at one point, but Pelleas helped. What's going on, Doctor?

DOCTOR: I'm not sure yet. One thing's for certain, there's more to this than a simple cave-in. Pandora, I wonder whether you'd mind taking a message to Beldonia?

PANDORA: You're trying to get rid of me, aren't you?

DOCTOR: No, no, not at... Well, yes. Look, whoever or whatever killed Elkin here may still be roaming free.

PELLEAS: The Doctor's right. You should go back.

PANDORA: I am flattered by your concern, both of you, but I think I can handle myself. The cavern's this way, is it?

ERIMEM: A woman after my own heart. Come on.

PERI: But who would do such a thing? Do you think it could be...?

ZIXLYR: Silence. Someone is coming.

PERI: Sounds like.

DOCTOR [OC]: You know, Pelleas, she does have a point.

PERI: The Doctor.

ERIMEM: Shh! We're here.

PERI: And Erimem.

ERIMEM: Peri. Are you all right?

PERI: Fine, fine. Zixlyr and I arrived after the collapse. There aren't any survivors, Doctor. It's good to see you, by the way.

DOCTOR: You too. I worry about you, you know.

PERI: I know. So, who are your friends?

DOCTOR: Forgive me. This is Princess Pandora of Earth and King Pelleas of Peladon.

PERI: Never could resist hanging out with the gentry, could you?

DOCTOR: Your Majesties, may I present Peri, also from Earth, and Ambassador Zixlyr of the Martian Empire.

PANDORA: Pleased to meet you both.

PELLEAS: Would that it were under happier circumstances.

ZIXLYR: Indeed. Your family seems to attract death and disaster.

PELLEAS: Why do you say that?

ZIXLYR: Please excuse me. The atmosphere here is unpleasant. I shall be in my quarters if you need me. Farewell, Doctor, Erimem, Princess, Peri.

PANDORA: Well, he's not a happy bunny. Whatever did you do to him, Pelleas, to make him so mad?

PELLEAS: Me? I...

PERI: Doctor, the Ambassador was speculating that this might have all been sabotage.

DOCTOR: Everything points that way, certainly.

ERIMEM: But why? Who would do such a thing?

ALPHA CENTAURI: I think I can answer that question.

DOCTOR: Alpha Centauri. How are you, my old friend?

ALPHA CENTAURI: Doctor? Is it you? You look... different.

DOCTOR: You don't. I see the years have been kind to you.
ALPHA CENTAURI: Not as kind as they've been to you. See? I have crow's feet.
DOCTOR: Hmm, it makes you look distinguished. Now, what did you mean just now? Do you know who's responsible for all this?
ALPHA CENTAURI: Indeed I do. It was Arktos.
PANDORA: Arktos?
PELLEAS: Here, on Peladon?
ALPHA CENTAURI: I'm afraid so.
ERIMEM: Who's Arktos?
DOCTOR: I've no idea.
PANDORA: Arktos, scourge of the Nine Worlds. The Silver Assassin, The Death Merchant?
PERI: Sounds like a nice guy.
DOCTOR: All right, so he's some sort of intergalactic criminal mastermind, but what's he doing on Peladon?
PELLEAS: Precisely. I thought they had him locked up on Arcturus.
DOCTOR: Ah, so he's an Arcturan, is he?
ALPHA CENTAURI: Yes, and he escaped. That's why Arcturus closed its borders. They thought they could recapture him before he left the system. Sadly he eluded them and managed to land here without being detected.
PELLEAS: But that's impossible. Our security systems are fool-proof.
DOCTOR: Evidently not.
PERI: Of course! The ghost ship!
PANDORA: Ghost ship? This gets more bizarre by the minute.
PERI: Just before we crashed in Zixlyr's ship, I noticed a blip on the radar. The Doctor said it might be another section of the ship on a parallel descent, but what if it was this Arktos guy's ship using us as a shield?
DOCTOR: Well done, Peri, impeccable reasoning. Alpha Centauri, where's Arktos now?
ALPHA CENTAURI: In his spaceship.
ERIMEM: You mean he's escaped? He murdered twenty people and you let him go?
ALPHA CENTAURI: Not... exactly.
PERI: Well, what, then?
ALPHA CENTAURI: I... Oh. Oh, this is so embarrassing. Mine is a peaceful race, you understand, we do not believe in violence.
PERI + ERIMEM: What?
ALPHA CENTAURI: I shot him.
PANDORA: Brilliant. Did you kill him?
ALPHA CENTAURI: Certainly not. I stunned and bound him. He's still in his ship at the entrance to the mines. I wondered, your Majesty whether I could prevail upon your guards to transport him to my space craft?
PELLEAS: Certainly. I'll fetch them at once.
PANDORA: No, let me. I'll tell your grandmother about the casualties too. The bodies will need to be collected and the families informed.
PELLEAS: Thank you, Pandora.
PANDORA: All part of the job description. I take it we're still on for tonight?
PELLEAS: Sorry?
PANDORA: Our wedding? Hardly an auspicious day.
PELLEAS: Yes. No. But we'll make it work, Pandora, I promise.
PANDORA: Of course we will, Pelleas.
DOCTOR: She'll make a fine ruler, your Majesty.
PELLEAS: At least one of us will. Come, Alpha Centauri. Take me to Arktos.
ALPHA CENTAURI: This way, your Majesty.
PERI: Death, destruction, tragedy, everywhere we go in the universe. Why do we never see the good things, Doctor?
DOCTOR: We do, Peri. We just don't notice them.
ERIMEM: Doctor, do you have a torch?
DOCTOR: I should think so. Why?
ERIMEM: I noticed something as we came in and I want to check it out.
PERI: What sort of thing?
ERIMEM: Something unearthed in the cave-in. It was probably just a trick of the light.
DOCTOR: Ah, at last. Here, one torch. What do you think you saw, Erimem?
ERIMEM: Writing. In my own tongue.

BELDONIA: This place is a mess. Hundreds of years of history destroyed in a few minutes.
PANDORA: At least most of the portraits are still on the walls. Including good old Paladin and his great beard. (laughs) Oh, sorry, I forgot. He's your late husband, isn't he? I meant no offence.

BELDONIA: None taken, I'm sure.

PANDORA: Look, I know we got off on the wrong foot, you and I, but can't we pull together? Pelleas needs us. Peladon needs us.

BELDONIA: You know nothing of Peladon. I came to thank you for bringing me Pelleas's message. Thank you. Now I must return to the infirmary. I have duties to perform.

PANDORA: Wait. We can't go on like this.

BELDONIA: See you at the wedding, my dear.

(Door closes.)

PANDORA: Oh, you bitter, twisted old harpy. Why are you so defensive the whole time? Why won't you for once in your life lower your shields and just open up?

(Door creaks open.)

WOMAN: Princess, come to me.

PANDORA: You know? I think I will. I'm sick to death of real people.

ERIMEM: Here. I was right. Hieroglyphs.

PERI: I don't understand. What are they doing carved into some rock here on Peladon?

DOCTOR: What indeed?

PERI: Do you reckon Arktos did it? What do they speak on Arcturus ?

DOCTOR: Arcturan, actually. No, Peri, these are Egyptian. As far as I know, no other race that writes in hieroglyphs. Well, there is one, actually.

PERI: Really?

DOCTOR: But they're all dead.

PERI: Ah.

DOCTOR: What does it say, Erimem?

ERIMEM: It's a warning. Four females of royal blood shall stand and fall. When the fourth falls, she will usher in the second reign of... Sekhmet, the Avenger.

PERI: That's it?

ERIMEM: The rest was destroyed in the rock fall .

PERI: Who's Sekhmet when he's at home?

DOCTOR: It's a she, Peri.

ERIMEM: And she devours worlds.

PANDORA: Déjà vu. The giant cat-flap. Presumably you led me here for a purpose? Well, I suppose I'll just head on back.

WOMAN: It is time we met, Princess.

PANDORA: Oh, absolutely.

WOMAN: Why do you delay?

PANDORA: Got a really irritating piece of grit in my shoe. Two ticks. There. Coming, ready or not.

PERI: So, you've met this Sekhmet before?

ERIMEM: My ancestors have. We still fear her. That is why I wear this signet ring, as a talisman to protect me from her.

PERI: Hey, that's the same symbol as on these hieroglyphs.

ERIMEM: It is Sekhmet's sigil. A lioness.

DOCTOR: A lioness, of course. Pandora said she found a sealed door carved with the figure of a lioness. The sign of Sekhmet.

PANDORA: I'm here.

WOMAN: I know. I see you.

PANDORA: Well, that's funny, because I can't see you.

WOMAN: And what do you see, Princess?

PANDORA: An upright coffin and four vases. It's all a bit minimalist for my taste.

WOMAN: They are canopic jars. Each hold the viscera of dead.

PANDORA: The dead what?

WOMAN: Queens, Princesses.

PANDORA: What?!

WOMAN: Elspira of Peladon, Alyxlyr of Mars, and now, Pandora of Earth.

PANDORA: I'm glad we had this little chat but I'm afraid I must be going now. It's getting late, and I'm due at a wedding shortly. My own. Oh!

WOMAN: You are going nowhere. For countless millennia I have waited in this crystal tomb, imprisoned by those who feared and despised me. The time of my release approaches.

PANDORA: What do you want from me?

WOMAN: Your blood.

PANDORA: How much blood?

WOMAN: All of it. My jailers thought themselves very clever when they designed this prison. Three locks to bind me in Space, a fourth to seal me in Time. Only the blood of a Royal female may unlock them. Two have gone before, you shall be the third. Look into the sarcophagus.

(Mechanism creaking.)

WOMAN: Behold my majesty.

PANDORA: Who... who are you?

WOMAN: My breath created the desert, and over it I set Sutekh to rule. I am Sekhmet the Avenger, the Eye of Ra and Queen of the Osirians. I will bathe in your blood and be reborn.

PANDORA: No, please, no. Nooooooo!

[Part Four]

ERIMEM: Sekhmet first visited my people at the time when Ra the Sun God chose to live among us as a human. As he aged, so his rivals began to plot against him. He summoned his divine Eye and transformed her into Sekhmet the Powerful One, the Avenger. Sekhmet slaughtered Ra's enemies and waded in their blood. But she didn't stop there. The raging Lioness had developed a taste for blood, and began slaughtering every living thing in an orgy of killing. Ra ordered the High Priest of his temple at Heliopolis to pour out seven thousand jars of beer and dye them red with the juice of pomegranates. When Sekhmet saw this lake of blood, she could not resist. She drank deep until, stupefied by alcohol, she was captured and imprisoned forever in a tomb of salt.

SEKHMET: No! No!

ERIMEM: We thought we had defeated her, but she has returned, and she is thirsty for vengeance.

PERI: Sekhmet's just a story, though, isn't it, Doctor? A myth.

DOCTOR: I'm afraid it's true.

PERI: You've got to be kidding me. A god?

DOCTOR: To the Egyptians, Sekhmet was a god, yes. But then, we'd be worshipped as gods if we landed out of the blue amongst a technologically backward people.

ERIMEM: You're saying Sekhmet was an alien?

DOCTOR: An Osirian. A member of a noble race of super-beings who ruled the universe millions of years before your time.

PERI: Killing people and drinking their blood? Doesn't sound terribly noble to me.

DOCTOR: Yes, well, every family has its wayward members.

ERIMEM: But what is Sekhmet doing on Peladon?

DOCTOR: She crash-landed, in a salt spaceship.

PERI: A what?

DOCTOR: Look at what's around you. Trisilicate. The hardest form of salt in the galaxy. Sekhmet was imprisoned in it and blasted into space. She must have crashed here thousands of years before this Citadel was built. She's been down here in the dark ever since, waiting, planning her vengeance.

PELLEAS: Mother. Mother, are you there?

SEKHMET: I am always here, my son.

PELLEAS: We've captured the off-worlder. His name is Arktos. Alpha Centauri will shortly be taking him back to Arcturus to face justice. It's over, Mother. Your soul can rest in peace now.

SEKHMET: Arktos is not the off-worlder who murdered me.

PELLEAS: What? Well, who was it, then?

SEKHMET: She calls herself... Erimem.

BELDONIA: Steel yourself, woman. She will be Queen of Peladon and there's nothing your stubborn old heart can do about it. Accept it.

(Knocks on door, it opens.)

BELDONIA: Princess. I apologise for... Princess? Pandora?

PERI: But why trisilicate, Doctor? Why not lead or titanium or something?

DOCTOR: That old wives tale about salt warding off evil isn't entirely spurious, Peri. Trisilicate is made up of negatively-charged atoms.

PERI: Sure. Anions, right? They affect osmosis in plants that live by the sea.

DOCTOR: Excellent. A botanist who knows her anions. Anyway, these atoms steadily sap energy. The longer Sekhmet has stayed in that prison, the weaker she's become.

ERIMEM: Until now.

DOCTOR: Yes. The miners must have cracked open the tomb, and ever since she's been growing in power, leeching energy from the outside world. The mystery is why she hasn't escaped yet.

PERI: Maybe she still needs the keys to the handcuffs.

DOCTOR: What?

PERI: Sorry. I was being facetious.

DOCTOR: You were being brilliant. Of course. The Osirians would have to have had other safeguards in place to restrain Sekhmet. Erimem, read that inscription again.

ERIMEM: Er... four females of royal blood shall stand and fall. When the fourth falls, she will usher in the second reign of Sekhmet, the Avenger.

DOCTOR: It's a blood-lock.

PERI: A what?

DOCTOR: A blood-lock. One of the strongest bonds in the universe. Only a specific type of blood - in this case the blood of four Royal females - can unlock it.

ERIMEM: Doctor, Pelleas's mother.

DOCTOR: Yes, she must have somehow stumbled upon Sekhmet shortly after the miners cracked open the tomb.

ERIMEM: Well, that's one of the four locks broken, but three others still hold her.

PERI: Two, actually.

ERIMEM + DOCTOR: What?

PERI: Zixlyr's a Martian Prince. He had a twin sister, Alyxlyr, who was Ambassador to Peladon. She went missing shortly after Pelleas's mother died.

DOCTOR: (sighs) Two locks broken, and two Royal females left.

ERIMEM: Beldonia and Pandora.

DOCTOR: Precisely. Erimem, find Pelleas and warn him. Peri and I will track down Beldonia and Pandora.

PERI: Sorry Doctor, I need to find Zixlyr and fast. He thinks Pelleas murdered his sister, and he's got a bomb primed to take him out.

DOCTOR: What? Wait, wait, wait, how did you know...?

PERI: (receding) Long story, tell you later.

DOCTOR: (sighs) I hope, Erimem, that there's nothing you're not telling me.

SEKHMET: Soon I shall have my freedom. Only one seal remains. The Princess out of Time. Then the universe will be my plaything once more.

(Knocking.)

PERI [OC]: Zixlyr? It's me, Peri. Zixlyr, I know you're in there. Let me in, please. It's about Alyxlyr.

(Door opens.)

ZIXLYR: Well?

PERI: She *is* dead. Murdered. But not by Pelleas.

ZIXLYR: Who, then?

PERI: Perhaps I'd better come in.

ERIMEM: Pelleas. I thought I'd find you here. We've got to get down to the Throne Room. Pandora and your grandmother are in grave danger.

PELLEAS: I know. Mother told me.

ERIMEM: No, this is something we've only just found out.

PELLEAS: The knowledge is new to me too. A viper in our midst, it seems. A viper that murdered my mother.

ERIMEM: Yes. Yes, that's right.

PELLEAS: You don't deny it?

ERIMEM: I'm afraid it's true. Every word.

PELLEAS: I had hoped you would tell me it was not so.

PELLEAS: I hoped my mother was wrong.

ERIMEM: Pelleas, what are you doing?

PELLEAS: I trusted you. And this is how you repay my trust.

ERIMEM: I don't know what you're taking about. Pelleas, please!

(Thump, thud.)

PELLEAS: I'm coming, Mother. I'm bringing her to you.

BELDONIA: Well, Grok? Any sign of her?

GROK: No, your Majesty. We've got men searching the Citadel as we speak. Do you think she went for a walk outside?

BELDONIA: Don't be stupid man, who goes for a walk in the middle of the night? It's exactly as it was with Elspira and the other girl. No body, no trace, they simply disappeared. It's the curse, Grok. We have rejected the old religion and the gods are angry.

DOCTOR: One god in particular.

BELDONIA: I do not care for eavesdroppers, Doctor.

DOCTOR: And I don't care for liars, Beldonia.
BELDONIA: I should have told you the truth when I first met you, Doctor.
DOCTOR: It's not your fault. No one ever does.
BELDONIA: Pandora's missing.
DOCTOR: I gathered.
BELDONIA: Do you know where?
DOCTOR: I've a pretty good idea. I just hope we're in time. Would you take me to the Hall of Portraits, your Majesty? And Grok, I wonder whether you'd mind fetching something for me?

ZIXLYR: Where is the Osirian's tomb?
PERI: I'm not sure. The Doctor mentioned something about a secret passageway behind one of the paintings.
ZIXLYR: I see.
PERI: You're going back to your packing? I thought you wanted to help! Well, fine. Be like that. Leave Peladon with your tail between your legs. You've no honour, no courage, and... and no...
ZIXLYR: No chance of succeeding without this.
PERI: A Xanthoid Volatiser?
ZIXLYR: Let us find this secret passageway.

DOCTOR: End of the line.
BELDONIA: Is this the door Pandora described?
DOCTOR: Lioness motif, no keyhole. I'd say it's a fairly likely candidate.
BELDONIA: And Pandora is behind it with that alien?
DOCTOR: That's my hunch, yes, and I hope I'm wrong.
BELDONIA: You're not. Look. The Princess's slipper.
(Aggedor growls.)
BELDONIA: What was that?
DOCTOR: The key to opening this door.
(Aggedor snuffling.)
DOCTOR: Hello, old girl.
GROK: You won't harm her, will you, Doctor?
DOCTOR: Of course not. I just need her to batter down this door with that horn of hers. We could use explosives, but I'd rather not risk the roof collapsing. Now Aggedor, look into the flame.
(The Doctor hums the Venusian lullaby.)
GROK: What's he doing?
BELDONIA: (sotto) Hypnotising her.
DOCTOR: Stand back. She knows what to do.
(It takes four goes.)
DOCTOR: We're through! Well done, Aggedor.
GROK: She's wounded. You said you wouldn't hurt her.
BELDONIA: Quiet, Grok. The beast is not bleeding. It must be something else. Take her back to the kennels and check her over.
DOCTOR: I'd prefer it if you went too, your Majesty.
BELDONIA: Nonsense, Doctor. I'm coming with you.
DOCTOR: Listen, if Pandora really is through there, that means Sekhmet may very well have broken the third lock. She only needs the blood of one more Royal female to break her bonds forever.
BELDONIA: I am not afraid, Doctor.
DOCTOR: No, but I am. Caged, Sekhmet might be defeated. Free, she's invincible.
BELDONIA: Very well. Grok, stay with the Doctor. Do as he says. You're his Champion now.

SEKHMET: She wakes, my son.
PELLEAS: I'm not your son, you wizened hag. You tricked me.
SEKHMET: Your mother offered more resistance.
PELLEAS: You killed her, didn't you?
SEKHMET: I did, and drank her blood.
PELLEAS: Then I shall kill you.
(Sonic weapon.)
SEKHMET: Does it hurt, boy?
PELLEAS: Please. I can't take much more.
SEKHMET: Oh, but you can. Boy. This is only the beginning.
ERIMEM: Leave him alone, Sekhmet.
(Thud.)
SEKHMET: You know me?

ERIMEM: I come from the race that defeated you.
SEKHMET: No one defeated me. I was betrayed by Ra, and he will pay for that betrayal.
DOCTOR: Oh, I very much doubt that. He's been dead for thousands of years. Hello, Erimem. Bearing up?
ERIMEM: I've had better nights.
DOCTOR: And Sekhmet here's seen better days. Where's Pandora?
SEKHMET: With her ancestors. She has served her purpose.
DOCTOR: Poor girl. You didn't have to kill her. Just one drop of her blood would have been enough for you to break the seal.
SEKHMET: I know. But why have one drop when you can go the whole hog? You seem very well acquainted with my predicament, Doctor.
DOCTOR: Ah. You know me, then.
SEKHMET: I know everything. I am Sekhmet, the powerful, the all-seeing Eye of Ra.
DOCTOR: What remains of her. Your fellow Osirians certainly stitched you up, didn't they? Salt prison, blood-locks, the works.
SEKHMET: What do you know of the Osirians?
DOCTOR: Oh, this and that. As far as I can tell they fall into three categories. The good, the bad, and - forgive me - the ugly.
SEKHMET: I assume you have a death wish, Doctor.
DOCTOR: On the contrary, I'm a great lover of life. Which is why I can't allow you to escape from here.
SEKHMET: (laughs) You can't stop me. Three of the four dimensional seals are already broken. I need but one more to gain release.
DOCTOR: Well, sorry to disappoint you, but Beldonia isn't coming.
SEKHMET: I do not need *her*. I need the blood of a Princess out of Time. Erimem is that Princess. A Pharaoh removed from her time stream by you.

PERI: What's he doing? He's antagonising her.
ZIXLYR: He's buying us time. Grok and I will distract Sekhmet while you and the Doctor rescue Erimem and Pelleas.
PERI: And then what?
ZIXLYR: We seal the chamber forever with this.
(Whine of the Xanthoid Volatiser.)
ZIXLYR: I'll set it for sixty seconds. Grok, we are relying on your marksmanship.
GROK: My spear has never yet missed its mark.
SEKHMET [OC]: Time Lord.

DOCTOR: Well, Sekhmet, since you know I'm a Time Lord you'll also know I have a time ship.
SEKHMET: The Tardis. I have read all this in the girl's puny mind.
DOCTOR: I'll make a deal with you. Release Pelleas and Erimem and I'll take you to wherever you want in the galaxy.
ERIMEM: Doctor, no. She'll kill you and steal the Tardis.
DOCTOR: That wouldn't be very wise of her, Erimem. The controls are isomorphic.
ERIMEM: What?
DOCTOR: They respond solely to my commands. Can't be operated without me being alive.
SEKHMET: (laughs) Very good, Doctor. You amuse me. A transparent lie, fit only to deceive a child.
DOCTOR: Oh. It worked before.
SEKHMET: Prepare to die, Doctor.
(Whoosh of spear, thunk, Sekhmet screams.)
DOCTOR: Good shot, Grok!
GROK: Quickly, Doctor. The King.
DOCTOR: He's unconscious.
PERI: You two grab him and I'll untie Erimem.
ERIMEM: Peri. Am I glad to see you.
PERI: Didn't think I'd desert my best friend now, did you?
ZIXLYR: Hurry. She's nearly pulled the spear free.
SEKHMET: This is your doing, Doctor. Now you will pay.
GROK: No!
DOCTOR: Grok! Get something to staunch the blood, someone!
GROK: No. It is too late. I die a Champion.
ZIXLYR: You have killed your last victim!
(Sonic weapon.)
PERI: Zixlyr, no!
SEKHMET: So shall you all die!
ERIMEM: Wait! I offer myself to you, in exchange for the lives of my friends.

SEKHMET: What kind of a bargain is that, girl? I already have you. I can drink your blood whenever I wish.

ERIMEM: But think how much sweeter my blood will taste if it's offered freely. A willing sacrifice from the ancient people who first encased you in this salt tomb. An atonement.

PERI: Erimem. I'd rather die than see you sacrifice yourself to that thing.

ERIMEM: What do you say, Sekhmet? The last of the Pharaohs offering herself to the last of the Osirians?

SEKHMET: I accept.

PERI: No!

ERIMEM: Excellent. And I seal the bargain with a kiss of this signet ring, which bears the sigil of the lioness, symbol of your power and majesty.

DOCTOR: The ring? Erimem, no. There's got to be another way.

ERIMEM: There isn't, Doctor. This is our only hope.

SEKHMET: There is no hope. I accept your sacrifice, but not your terms. I shall drain your blood and then I shall kill your friends.

(Sonic weapon.)

PERI: Erimem!

ERIMEM: Stay back, Peri. I know what I'm doing. The Doctor will tell you.

(Rumbling.)

SEKHMET: The fourth lock is opening. Soon I will be free.

ERIMEM: No, Sekhmet. Soon you will be dead. I poisoned my blood.

SEKHMET: What?

ERIMEM: Distilled mandrake root. A capsule contained in my signet ring. I swallowed it just now.

SEKHMET: No! It cannot be!

ERIMEM: In a few moments, you and I will be dead. You should learn to be more careful, Sekhmet. That's the second time you've been caught out by drugged blood.

(Thud.)

PERI: Erimem! Doctor, she's still breathing.

DOCTOR: See if you can rouse Pelleas. I'll take care of Erimem. We need to get out of here before this place collapses.

SEKHMET: It will not end like this! I shall tear this universe apart!

DOCTOR: You're finished, Sekhmet! You've brought this destruction upon yourself.

SEKHMET: You, Doctor, you are to blame! I have power enough to end your miserable existence!

(Sonic weapon. The Doctor cries out.)

ZIXLYR: Leave him alone.

PERI: Zixlyr. We thought you were dead.

ZIXLYR: I soon will be. Now, get out of here. I'm going to seal the tomb.

(Whirring.)

ZIXLYR: Sixty seconds. That's all you have.

SEKHMET: Release me, Ice Prince, or I shall burn out your eyes!

ZIXLYR: That would be a welcome relief, murderess, from staring at your emaciated face.

PERI: Come with us, Zixlyr.

ZIXLYR: No. I will hold Sekhmet until you're safe.

PERI: But you'll die.

ZIXLYR: My place is here with Alyxlyr. Save your friends, Peri, as you saved my honour. Farewell.

PERI: Right. Get up, Pelleas.

PELLEAS: Where... where am I?

PERI: No time for clichés. Pick up Erimem and carry her back through the tunnel to the Citadel. I'll help the Doctor.

PELLEAS: Shouldn't we...?

PERI: Don't argue, just do it!

PELLEAS: Of course.

PERI: Come on, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Sorry, Peri. I don't think I can make it.

PERI: I haven't finished with you yet! I need you to save Erimem. Now, come on!

SEKHMET: Release me and I shall spare your life, my friend.

ZIXLYR: My life is not yours to spare, Sekhmet. Let us embrace death together.

SEKHMET: No. No!

(Whine, KaBOOM!)

BELDONIA: Well? Can you see them yet?

NARDO: Nothing yet, your Majesty. No. Oh, wait, I think this is them.

BELDONIA: Frankis, get down there and help.

FRANKIS: At once, your Majesty.

BELDONIA: Oh, Great Aggedor, let not my grandson have died. Grant me this one prayer and I promise to

accede to all his future wishes without demurral. Let him marry whom he will, I shall embrace his choice.
Pelleas! My boy! You're safe.

PELLEAS: Grandmother, Pandora's dead. And Erimem here. she's poisoned.

BELDONIA: Put her down over here. Frankis, Nardo. A stretcher, quickly.

PERI: Make that two. The Doctor's hurt badly as well.

DOCTOR: Let me... Let me lie down for a while.

PELLEAS: Doctor, I... I think Erimem's dead. Her pulse has stopped.

PERI: No, she can't be. Erimem. Erimem!

DOCTOR: Pelleas, fetch me a knife.

PELLEAS: What?

BELDONIA: You heard him, boy. Get your grandfather's dagger over there.

PELLEAS: Yes, Grandmother.

DOCTOR: Peri. Peri, where are you?

PERI: I'm here, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Ah... I must be losing my sight. Adjusting. Now Peri, I want you... to listen very carefully... to what I'm about to tell you.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Everything is prepared for departure, Lady Peri. Arktos is secure in the brig, and the Doctor's Tardis has been located in orbit above Peladon. It is but a small detour on our route.

PERI: Thank you, Alpha Centauri. You're most kind.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Oh, I keep thinking about the Princess. If I had known I was bringing her here to die, I... I should have...

PERI: You weren't to know. None of us did.

ALPHA CENTAURI: And Ambassador Zixlyr?

PERI: Yes. I guess you're going to have a whole deal of trouble explaining all this to Earth and Martian Governments.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Oh, I had hoped to retire this year, but I fear this will take many months of careful negotiation to smooth over.

PERI: Well, you're the hermaphroditic hexapod for the job.

ALPHA CENTAURI: (laughs) I suppose I am. So, where will you go?

PERI: Somewhere. Anywhere. You never know with the Tardis.

ALPHA CENTAURI: And... the Doctor?

PERI: Ask him yourself. Here he comes now.

DOCTOR: Well, well, well.

PERI: Three holes in the ground.

DOCTOR: What? Ah, yes, very clever. Beldonia and I have just been visiting the kennels.

PERI: How is Aggedor? You said he was kind of...

DOCTOR: She.

PERI: Oh.

DOCTOR: That is rather important.

PERI: She was pretty beat up after breaking down that door.

BELDONIA: Aggedor's pain was caused by something altogether different.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Oh! Oh, I do hope the creature is all right.

PERI: Alpha Centauri, you single-handedly captured the galaxy's most dangerous criminal, and you still have a soft spot for furry creatures.

DOCTOR: You can both relax. Aggedor's fine. They were just labour pains.

PERI: You mean she's pregnant?

DOCTOR: Was pregnant. For almost a century, it appears. Show them the basket, Beldonia.

BELDONIA: New life comes to Peladon.

(Mewling.)

BELDONIA: See?

PERI: Baby Aggedors! They're so cute.

ALPHA CENTAURI: Oh! Oh, my! Oh, forgive me, I must return to my ship. I er, I think I have something in my eye.

ERIMEM: Is this a private joke or can anyone join in?

PERI: Erimem. How are you feeling?

ERIMEM: Never better. And you, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Oh, I think I'm good for a few years yet.

PELLEAS: Forgive me, Doctor. I still don't understand what magic you used to purge Erimem's blood.

DOCTOR: Not magic, Pelleas, science. Sekhmet's attack on me severely weakened my system and activated the regenerative platelets in my blood. They were still active when we emerged into the Hall of Portraits. Peri here performed a very crude blood transfusion using your grandfather's dagger. My Time Lord platelets rushed through Erimem's veins, eliminating the poison and reviving the dying blood cells. I suppose

you could say Erimem's life was quite literally on a knife-edge.

PELLEAS: I... I see.

PERI: Just nod as if it makes perfect sense. That's seen me through so far.

PELLEAS: You reminds me of my mother, Doctor. Science, not superstition.

DOCTOR: That's always been my motto, Pelleas, and it's seen me through so far, touch wood.

PERI: Well, I suppose we'd better get going. Alpha Centauri's on a tight schedule.

DOCTOR: Indeed. Goodbye, Pelleas, Beldonia.

BELDONIA: Once more, Peladon is in your debt, Doctor.

PELLEAS: Next time you visit you must come for a holiday.

DOCTOR: You know, I might just do that. Farewell, your Majesties.

PERI: Bye. Come on, Erimem. I'll race you to the spaceship.

ERIMEM: I'm not coming.

PERI: What? What did you say?

ERIMEM: Beldonia, Pelleas, I wonder if we might have a few moments on our own?

BELDONIA: I understand. Come, Pelleas.

PELLEAS: What? Oh, yes, of course.

PERI: Erimem?

ERIMEM: I'm staying here, on Peladon.

DOCTOR: Erimem, are you sure?

ERIMEM: I've never felt more sure of anything in my whole life. I have loved travelling with you and Peri, Doctor, really I have. I've stepped onto other worlds, seen wonders beyond the imagination. But all the time I've been evading my true destiny. I was born to rule. That is my purpose. And when I joined you in the Tardis, I forgot that.

PERI: But why here? Why Peladon?

ERIMEM: Because I understand it. This is the world in which I was brought up. I understand its society, its politics, its ancient traditions. And this is a world which needs a strong ruler. Pelleas is a good man, but he's young, and... he wants to run before he can walk. I think I can show him how to be a good ruler, as his mentor, and his wife.

PERI: His wife?

ERIMEM: Pelleas offered me his hand in marriage an hour ago, and I intend to accept. We're genuinely fond of each other, and... who knows, that may blossom into love.

PERI: Blossom into love? Listen to yourself, you're... you're not making any sense. Oh Doctor, don't just stand there being silent and sympathetic. Say something.

DOCTOR: What do you want me to say, Peri? Erimem has made up her mind.

PERI: Well, what about Dracula? You changed your mind about staying with him, remember?

ERIMEM: Peri, please don't fight me. You are my best friend, perhaps my only friend, and a friend is what I need right now.

PERI: Come here and give me a hug, you... stupid Great Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: Oh, Peri.

PERI: I think you'll make a great Queen. And with a husband like Pelleas, you're gonna have the best-looking kids this side of Betelgeuse.

ERIMEM: Will you stay for the wedding?

PERI: I... I think we'd better get going. Doctor?

DOCTOR: Perhaps it would be best. I never know what to wear at weddings. Goodbye, Erimem. I think you're doing the right thing.

ERIMEM: Thank you, Doctor, for everything.

PERI: Take care, Mrs Queen. And remember, we know where you live now. So you make sure you bring those kids up right. When we come back - and we will - I want to be treated with respect by my nephews and nieces.

ERIMEM: (laughs) I promise. Goodbye.

PERI: Au revoir. Come on, Doctor. Race you to the ship.

DOCTOR: (sighs) She'll be uncontrollable without you.

ERIMEM: You'd better get going. She's nearly there.

DOCTOR: Oh, I think I can still beat her.

ERIMEM: I think you can beat anyone, Doctor.

PERI: Here. Best I could do. Alpha Centauri assures me this really is coffee, but... I think he must have different taste buds.

DOCTOR: Thank you.

PERI: Pretty, isn't it?

DOCTOR: The coffee?

PERI: The planet, dummy. We should get one of these picture windows for the Tardis.

DOCTOR: Wouldn't work.

PERI: Dimensionally impossible?

DOCTOR: No, we'd spend the whole time fighting over who got the best viewing seat. Midnight. A lot can happen in twenty four hours.

PERI: As Einstein said, time is all relative.

DOCTOR: We'll make a physicist of you yet.

PERI: Hey. I know what you're thinking.

DOCTOR: A physicist and a telepath? Is there no end to your talents?

PERI: You miss her, Doctor. And so do I. But... we've got each other.

DOCTOR: I miss them all, Peri. Everybody leaves.

PERI: Yeah? Well, when I do, Doctor, I can promise you this. It won't be cos I'm going to marry some alien King.